

ACCELERATED ACCESS TO AN ELECTRONIC CATALOG

Abstract of the Disclosure

The invention relates to systems and methods for accelerating a user's access to the contents of an e-commerce Web site. Many consumers access wide area networks through relatively slow connections, such as dial-up connections. Some files, such as images, are relatively large and download relatively slowly to a user computer. The slow connections can make browsing through a merchant's online catalog time-consuming and frustrating. Embodiments of the invention distribute the online catalog between at least the Web server and a Distributed Electronic Catalog Component (DECC), such as a CD-ROM, that can be removably inserted into and out of the user's computer. The DECC and corresponding software detect when data can be extracted from the DECC, rather than merely slowly downloaded over a network. This provides relatively fast access to at least a portion of the online catalog, thereby providing the user with faster access to the online catalog.

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